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21 November 1984

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director of Central Intelligence  
Executive Director  
Deputy Director for Operations

FROM: Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT: Draft Letter on Improved Congressional Oversight

1. Apropos of my discussion with Clair this morning about the HPSCI staffers coming out here and asking everybody a lot of questions and immediately running out to give their views to John Scali of ABC, I would like you to think about this letter which Chuck Briggs drafted and make any suggestions for improving it or whatever, and let's talk about when and whether it should go.

2. In telling Moynihan about [redacted] he was as mild as a lamb. I don't know whether he was Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde but it wasn't the Moynihan we have been reading about in the public prints.

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William J. Casey

Attachment:  
As stated

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Director, Office of Legislative Liaison

14 November 1984

NOTE TO: DCI

- o You asked to see this draft letter on improved Congressional oversight which I mentioned this a.m. If hearings on the pamphlet are postponed, or do not come off, this might be a vehicle for sending the message.
- o The second paragraph, and all following paragraphs, are simply lifted from the draft statement which you have for the Tayacan pamphlet hearing.

  
Charles A. Briggs

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Central Intelligence Agency



Washington, D.C. 20505

The Honorable Barry M. Goldwater  
Chairman  
Select Committee on Intelligence  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I have been increasingly concerned in these last weeks of the 98th Congress with the breakdown in trust between the Agency and its Oversight Committees. Both Committees appear likely to see changes in leadership, major turnover in Committee membership and perhaps related staff changes. Following the "Tayacan manual" experience we here have made some significant organizational and procedural changes. I suggest that we take this time, prior to the launching of the 99th Congress, to set right the relationship between us.

The recent publicity over the psychological warfare manual is but the latest in a series of events that have poisoned the atmosphere. Accusations have been made about the Agency's involvement with members of the death squads in El Salvador, about possible violations of the Boland Amendment, about

In each instance, wild allegations were made in the press and media. We were tried and convicted on page one before the facts were ever established. We were assumed to be guilty. We were alleged to be once again a rogue elephant out of control. A recent New York Times editorial spoke of the Agency's "having to be stopped from illegal minings and murders." The U.S. News and World Report referred to the "murder manual."

In each case, Members of Congress also voiced their convictions that we operated in reckless disregard of the law. In each case, Committee staff descended upon us. They poured through our files, assuming that the smoking gun was bound to be on the next page or in the next cable.

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In fact, time after time, the evidence has shown that such problems as existed were far less serious than the charges raised. This is particularly true in the most insidious charge, that the Agency was somehow involved with the death squads in El Salvador. You and your staffs have found this not to be true. I have seen no retractions or clarifications on page one of the Times or the Post. When these stories are carried, they are buried with the obituaries.

I know that each and every one of you supports the Central Intelligence Agency, its hard working and dedicated people, and its intelligence gathering and analytical efforts. You show this support in many ways--but particularly in your authorization of more money and more people for our endeavors. You know the personal costs to us--the lives that have been lost in the last year--of the dangerous and exacting nature of our mission. You frequently talk with our analysts before you travel overseas. You seek our opinions on the meaning of recent events abroad.

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You must understand the incalculable harm that is done to the Agency--its people and its mission--by the continuing sensationalism that is focused upon us in the press and the media. Charges that the Agency is out of control are seized upon and trumpeted in the press around the world. When our people were killed [redacted] many in the Communist world and in parts of the Third World cheered their deaths. Attacks on our people overseas have become more frequent, and life in many parts of the world is difficult and very dangerous for our officers. At home, such charges undermine the morale of our employees. Overt analysts, technicians, translators, face hostile queries from friends and families. Recruiting the best and brightest from our nation's campuses becomes exceedingly difficult. As you know, our recruiters were run off several prestigious campuses as a result of the flurry of accusations surrounding the psychological warfare manual.

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This has got to stop. This is not what the Members of this Committee want. It is certainly not what I or the Agency wants. We can try for better understanding from the media, but will not fully succeed. But we can stop airing every problem between us in the press before the facts can be ascertained. You, as legislators, have every right to question Administration policy on issues. For example, however you may feel about arms control, I know you agree that we have got to halt the leaks that enable the Soviets to counter our technological collection

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advances. Similarly, however you may feel about Administration policy [redacted] you know that we have legitimate and properly authorized [redacted] programs [redacted] and that revelation of the details [redacted] jeopardizes the lives of our employees, risks the lives of our sources, and could ultimately result in the loss of information that is critically important to America's own freedom.

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For my part, I pledge to you that I and my senior managers will go forward with this Committee in an open, candid, and forthcoming fashion. We will answer your questions as fully and as quickly as we are able. We will seek your advice and counsel. We will endeavor to put a stop, here and now, to any behavior on our part that could cause you to believe us duplicitous. I will sit down, personally and privately, with any Member of the Committee, and especially with its new leaders and Members, to talk our problems through. I do not expect us to be in accord on all issues, but I do expect us to be able to put the greater good of the Agency first.

For your part, I hope you will accept the validity of the concerns I have expressed today.

I hope that you and your successors will act to ensure discipline and management in this Committee as I intend to restore discipline and management [redacted]

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I hope that you will take up my offer to meet privately to express your concerns before they reach the news media. I hope you will agree to get the facts before making charges.

But most of all I hope, and expect, that this will be a watershed in our relations. Responsible oversight is your duty, and it is a necessity for ensuring that the American people can place trust in their intelligence agencies. Let us begin.

Sincerely,

William J. Casey  
Director of Central Intelligence

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